

THE McELWEE HOUSE (Residence)
YORK COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

HABS No 3C-11

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

THE McELWEE HOUSE (Residence)
YORK COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

OWNER:

The McElwee House is located on land owned by the United States Government, lying in the north west corner of York County, South Carolina, and designated as the Kings Mountain Recreational Area which is adjacent to the Kings Mountain National Military Park. The structure is located within the Group Camp No. 1 Development Area and is approximately five hundred feet from the shore of Lake McElwee. This Area lies along the North and South Carolina State Line approximately ten miles from York, South Carolina and ten miles from Kings Mountain North Carolina.

DATE OF ERECTION:

This building was erected, as far as is known, between 1765 and 1781.

BUILDER:

William McElwee, the original grantee of the land, was the builder.

PRESENT CONDITION:

At the present time the building is in fair condition, and is resting on its original foundations. The logs in the

original portion of the building are sound with the exception of the northwest corner, where several sections have rotted out. Most of the clay and straw chinking has fallen from between the logs. The stone chimney on the north side has recently been struck by lightning and is in immediate danger of falling.

The central portion, constructed of heavy logs, is the original building, being two stories high. The stone chimney on the north end is original. A photograph taken in 1895 shows the kitchen was a separate structure and located about twenty feet north of the present log house, connected to it by board walks. No evidences of this kitchen can be found at the site and the date of its construction is unknown. A frame addition containing two rooms, a porch, and a cut stone and brick chimney have been added to the original log house. The present metal roof over the central portion is not original. The entire structure was weatherboarded with three-fourths inch by eight inch pine boards from approximately 1873 to 1938, which contributed largely in preserving the original logs.

The date of the weatherboarding was ascertained by finding a block of wood, used to furr out from the log wall to the weatherboards, with the following written on it: "C. C. Beamguard, Yorkville, 1873"

MATERIALS OF CONSTRUCTION:

The McElwee House is a log and frame structure resting on loose rock foundations without any mortar holding the rocks in place. The house faces slightly south east. The main portion of the building is constructed of hand hewn pine logs chinked with clay and straw. The maximum size of the hewn oak sill is eighteen inches by twelve inches. The joints fit closely but the chinks are wide, varying from three to six inches. The beams on the inside are adzed and pegged. The large chimney on the north end is original and is constructed of random uncoursed ledge rock with clay joints. The chimney on the south end was built at the time the house was weatherboarded. The lower two-thirds of this chimney is made of cut stones with lime mortar joints, the upper part of common bricks.

Built on to the log structure is a frame addition on the west side and a porch on the east side. These additions are built of sawn materials and fastened to the main portion with iron pins. It appears that these additions were made at the time of the weatherboarding.

The original roof on the log structure was approximately twenty two inches lower than the present galvanized iron roof. The original log plate is still in place. The second floor joists are original, being about three inches

by eight inches hewn pinetimbers and extending the entire width of the building. The joists extend through the log walls on the east, or front, side the ends of the joists are cut off flush with the wall, while on the west side they extend beyond the outside face in varying lengths.

The present door and window openings are not original. Investigation shows the original window openings to be small and far between and approximately six or seven feet from the ground. Their position seems to indicate a safety measure and since numbers of Indian arrow heads have been found in the immediate vicinity of the house this precaution appears justified.

The interior of the building is ceiled with good sound heart tongue and groove pine boards of varying widths. All the present inside work was probably done at the time the additions were made to the building.

HISTORICAL DATA:

Certified Copy of Land Grant No. 352

TO: William McElwee,
Mecklengurgh County
State of North Carolina

DATED: October 30, 1765

NORTH CAROLINA LAND GRANT

#352. William McElwee 200 Mecklengurgh County on both sides of Clarks Fork of Bullocks Creek and bounded as follows, viz: Beginning at a Red Oak thence No. 5 Wt. 180 poles to a White Oak thence No. 85 Et. 180 poles to a White Oak thence So. 5 Et. 180 poles to a Hickory and thence So. 85 Wt. 180 poles to the beginning. Dated 30th. October, 1765.

Signed: Wm. Tryon

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Thad Eure, Secretary of State of the State of North Carolina do hereby certify the foregoing and attached one sheet to be a true copy from the records of this office.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal.

Done in office at Raleigh the 26th. day of April
in the year of our Lord 1939.

Signed: Thad Eure,
Secretary of State

SEAL

HISTORICAL DATA: (Continued)

Letter from Miss Jennie M. Oates, Chester, S. C.,
a descendent of William McElwee, dated June 9, 1937.

"My grandmother was Jane McElwee, daughter of John McElwee, and married my grandfather, William Oates, on April 1, 1841. She was born August 22, 1811 and died December 8, 1895. She was born, raised, and died at the home place, the old house which is now standing, which is the original house from my mother's knowledge, who is 77 years old now. She was born in 1811, and the house must have been built twenty years before that time which would take it back to about 1791. I shall be glad to show these newspaper clippings or make copies of them for the Government if they desire, and will also be glad to go to York and trace the ownership of the place back to show where her father, my great-grandfather, got same. John McElwee, my great-grandfather gave the place to my grandmother, Jane McElwee Oates, and for my grandmother I am named. You or the Government can secure a picture of the home place from my cousins, W. Oates Stroup or M. M. Stroup, Clover, S. C. (This picture was made in 1895 and is included in the Photographic Report accompanying this Survey) I sincerely hope the old home place can be saved and put back in its original order. Please let me know if there is anything further I can do to help out.

HISTORICAL DATA: (Continued)

(Letter from Miss Jennie M Oates Continued)

This is the original old house, and stands exactly where it always has."

"Stop by the next time you are here."

Jennie M. Oates

Copy of Paper Written By Mamie McElwee, Statesville, N. C.
(September 10, 1936)

THE McELWEE HOME
Near Kings Mountain Battle-Field

From Lossings "Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution"
Vol. 2, Page 429, also Lossings "Hours With the Living
Men and Women of The Revolution" Pages 95 - 104.

"Being at his home three miles from Kings
Mountain, on furlough, he voluntarily fought with his
countrymen at the Battle of Kings Mountain". This was
William McElwee 3rd. (1762-1854) at the home of his father
William McElwee 2nd.(1718-1807)

From Rockwood Times, March 10, 1910; written by Captain
W. E. McElwee, Rockwood, Tennessee.

"William White, son of Richard White, the first
Justice of the Peace who held office in the Watauga

HISTORICAL DATA: (Continued)

(Paper by Mamie McElwee Continued)

Settlement, was a companion of James McElwee in Colonel Campbell's Regiment and was wounded at the Battle of Kings Mountain and was taken by McElwee to the home of his, McElwee's father who lived only a few miles from the Battleground.

From the Article- "Soldiers of the Revolutionary War Who Were Buried in Roane County"

From Rev. Mr. Lathan, D. D. - A. R. P. Minister - An article written on a brief History of The McElwee Family, written on the death of Rev. William Meek McElwee of Pennsylvania.

"William McElwee 2nd. came from Tyrone, Ireland in 1750 and settled in Pennsylvania. He moved from Penn. to Green County, Virginia and in 1765 to York, County, S. C. settling on Clark's Fork two and a half miles from the Battle-Field of Kings Mountain. He was a determined and outspoken Whig. His motto was "Freedom from British Rule or Death". He and all his sons who were able to carry a gun went into the army.

Information on the house of William McElwee 2nd. of Pennsylvania, then Virginia and South Carolina -
By: Mamie McElwee of Statesville, North Carolina.

HISTORICAL DATA:(Continued)

(Paper by Mamie McElwee Continued)

About twenty years ago I visited the old ancestral homes of the McElwee family gathering data for a family history. Mr. Meek Faulkner, who lived in the home built at the close of the war by William McElwee 3rd., took me to see the original home of the family built by William McElwee 2nd. who came from Pennsylvania to Virginia and then to Clark's Fork in South Carolina.

I made the following notations. " Home of William McElwee 2nd. then home of John (Brother of William II - about two years younger) McElwee Senior, then Jane Oates daughter of John McElwee, Sr. and at this time the property of William G. Oates and Margret Oates."

I have a picture taken at this time of the house and of the spring. Mr. Faulkner told me that the Tories had built a fire in the yard of the McElwee home, heated the water and were just ready to kill the hogs when they heard the sound of battle and fled.

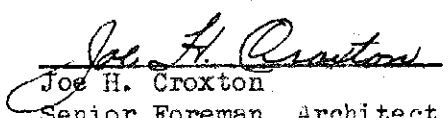
He also told of William McElwee 2nd. and William McElwee 3rd. being in the battle and that John a lad of 12 or 13 years shouldered his gun and started but turned back. His mother seeing him told him to go on and he did.

HISTORICAL DATA: (Continued)

(Paper by Mamie McElwee Continued)

I also visited the log house in which Lossing spent the night which he refers to in his history. It was built of hewed logs with beaded edges and had a fire place 7 ft. by 9 ft. . It was the home of Agnes McElwee Faulkner and Nellie McElwee Leslie. It was dilapidated at that time and I presume has fallen by this time." (The House referred to here has been destroyed, only a few foundation stones remain at the site. This House was located near The McElwee House and was known as The Leslie House.)

Signed: Mamie McElwee
Statesville, N. C.


Joe H. Croxton
Senior Foreman, Architect

Aug 22, 1939